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ON ISRAEL'S ORIGINS

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There is a peculiar fascination in the study of origins. The beginnings of social and religious institutions, the elements which have gone into the mental and physical structures of man, the genesis of life itself, both in the animal and in the vegetable kingdoms, the origin of our earth and of the solar systems of the universe—these are the problems toward the attempt of whose solution man seems to be drawn as irresistibly as the moth to the candle, and, one may add, often with considerable damage to fancy's wings. I suspect that this tendency is to be accounted for not wholly by the assumption that man is unable to find rest until he has discovered the "why" and "whence" of things, but in part by the fact that here there is room for the free play of the imagination. We like to construct, and, next to the building of castles in the air, the construction of hypotheses satisfies this craving. We grow restive as we arrange in order the well-attested events of history or analyze the character of even the most daring innovator; but when we turn from these prosaic tasks to the study of a people's myths and legends, to the problem of extracting therefrom what we choose to regard as the underlying facts and of combining these with those scraps of historical narrative which are always imbedded in the "early histories" of nations, we are immediately placed in a position where hypotheses are necessary, and we are happy.

But we must not suppose that this interest in beginnings is of recent origin. We turn to the Old Testament and find that the men who set about to write the history of the Hebrew people felt that so important a theme demanded an exhaustive treatment, and so, like Mr. Knickerbocker of a later day, they began with the creation of the world. These men were not driven to hypotheses, as are our moderns, by the exhaustion of the supply of historical

data; they calmly availed themselves of the inexhaustible store of myths and legends which were afloat in the land, and, thus supplied, easily filled in all gaps. Their only embarrassment was an *embarras de richesses*. Where the scientific mind puts forth a hypothesis the primitive mind creates a myth, and my readers will surely agree with me when I add that the positive statements of the latter usually make more interesting reading than the "ifs" and "perhapses" of the former.

A great advance in our understanding of the mythology of the Hebrews was brought about by Gunkel in his *Sagen der Genesis* and other works. The stories of Genesis are similar to those of other peoples. Naïve folk-tales answering such questions as whence came heaven and earth, why men observe the Sabbath, how speech originated and why different peoples speak different languages, why we wear clothes, why the serpent crawls on its belly, and a hundred others, constitute a group of aetiological myths. Then there is a group of ethnological myths, explaining why Canaan is the servant of his brothers, why Japheth has so large a territory, why this or that people lives where it does, and so forth. Many cult-myths explain the origin of the sacredness of this or that national sanctuary—Bethel, Beersheba, Hebron, and others; or the reasons underlying ritual customs such as the anointing of sacred stones. The etymological stories account for the names of the patriarchs (Isaac, Jacob, Israel, etc.) as well as for many place-names, and, like the other classes of myths, contain much that is of value for the study of Hebrew life and thought, even if they do jar the nerves of modern linguistic science. With such a supply of myths at hand, the writers who desired to go into the origins of the Hebrew people had only to choose and arrange their materials. When the stories of the heroes of the nation were to be told, the supply of popular legends, which was probably even greater than that of the myths, was an ever-present help in times when historical records failed.

There was a point, however, at which some of the writers of about the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. were probably genuinely embarrassed—namely, the point at which it was necessary for them to decide as to the way in which to approach the matter of the origin of

the national religion. Yahweh was in theory at least, if not in practice, the God and only God of Israel. He was worshiped in different places. But the myths connected with some of these seemed to indicate that they had originally been sacred to other gods, to certain *el's*—El-Olam of Beersheba, El-Bethel of Bethel, El-Roi of Kadesh, El-Berith of Shechem, El-Pachad of Mizpah, El-Shaddai and El-Elyon, whose place connections we cannot determine. Furthermore, the common people kept making pilgrimages to shrines like Bethel and Gilgal where they practiced cults which were objectionable to those who stood for what they regarded as pure and undefiled Yahweh-worship. The writers we have in mind belonged to this puritan party, but they were not extremists. One of them, whom modern scholars call E,¹ held that Yahweh first revealed himself to Moses (Exod. 3:14), and consequently Yahweh's name does not appear in his stories of the patriarchs;² the other, whom we call J,¹ has Yahweh prepare the way from the foundation of the world for the people of his choice. Both E and J make Moses the organizer of the nation and of the national worship—that is, of the worship of Yahweh. The nation and the religion were organized, according to these writers, in the period between the exodus from Egypt and the entrance into Canaan. If doubts were being expressed in their day as to the legitimacy of the worship at such places as Bethel, Hebron, and Beersheba, the sacredness of these shrines was vouched for by the stories which told of Yahweh's appearance there to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This procedure may seem to us similar to that of the pious Christian monks who sprinkled holy water upon the sacred lakes and tarns or inserted images of the Virgin into the trunks of oaks, which were the objects of worship of the heathen Germanic tribes; but we must always bear in mind the fact that canons of historical criticism were non-existent in those days—for which some of us are exceedingly grateful—and, further, that these “warblers of poetic prose” were enunciating their expanding faith in an eternal, almighty, and ubiquitous god.

¹ Whether J and E are to be regarded as individuals or groups of writers is immaterial for our discussion.

² He held, however, that Yahweh had appeared to these as El-Roi, El-Pachad, etc.

It was J and E, then, who gathered together most of the material out of which the Old Testament hypothesis¹ of Israel's origins was constructed. We have already indicated the probable source of much of that material. What has modern biblical scholarship done with this hypothesis?

Modern critical² scholarship is almost unanimously of the opinion that Yahweh was originally a Midianite god connected with Mount Sinai, whither neighboring tribes, probably including those which later made up Israel, repaired from time to time to worship.

But even though Yahweh was originally the name of the god of Sinai [I quote from Marti's *Religion of the Old Testament*—one would find almost the same words in any other work on the religion of Israel by a scholar of the Wellhausen school], it immediately received a higher significance under the Israelites than that which it had possessed as the god of the confederate tribes of Mount Sinai. The reason is this: Yahweh manifested himself in history by the liberation of the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage; he led them safely to Kadesh, and there united them with the kindred tribes to form one people. . . . The instrument which Yahweh used in order to make known his power both in Egypt and at Kadesh was Moses, the leader of the people and the prophet. . . . The nation's very first steps were taken in the direction which led to the highest goal: this we realize as we notice, firstly, that the ideal of later ages is nothing else than the further development of the principles laid down by Moses, and, secondly, that in the ethical demands which the prophets made they were conscious of being in harmony with the origins of the religion of Israel.

Briefly put, the critical scholars of our day make the covenant at Sinai the starting-point of Yahwism in Israel. In case the excursion to Mount Sinai is ruled out, and this is done by many, the "enthronement of Yahweh at Kadesh" (I use Gressmann's phrase) takes the place of the covenant at Sinai. In any case Moses is regarded as the "leader of the people" (organizer of the nation) and "prophet" (organizer of the religion). In other words, critical scholars have accepted the essential features of the JE hypothesis of Israel's beginnings. Of course these scholars admit the legendary character of the whole cycle of Moses stories, but believe that it is possible by critical methods to get at the history back of these

¹ To them it was, of course, history.

² "Conservative" scholars, like J and E, regard the stories of the Pentateuch as history, so we need not tarry with them.

legends. They also recognize the necessity of keeping constantly before one's eyes, during these excursions into pre-history, the later development of the religion of Israel as this may be traced in the historical records and the prophetic writings. The results arrived at are, therefore, based upon careful and cautious reasoning. Nevertheless, the writer doubts the validity of much of this reasoning, and it is the purpose of this paper to air this doubt.

For reasons which will become apparent as we go along, our discussion will be opened with a brief résumé of the connections between Babylonia and the Westland, Syria-Palestine, before the entrance of the Israelites into the latter region. The Exodus and Conquest will next engage our attention. We shall then be ready to attack some of the problems connected with the religious origins of Israel. Let me add, by way of parenthesis, that it is not to be inferred from the opening sentence of the program here outlined that any flirtation with the theories of the pan-Babylonists is contemplated.

From the very dawn of history Amurru, the Amorite land, seems to have attracted every Babylonian king whose prowess had subdued all rivals in the Tigris-Euphrates valley and whose ambition was now urging him to seek new worlds to conquer. Lugalzaggisi, king of Uruk (Erech, Gen. 10:10), whose date is to be put at about 2850 B.C., tells us, in an inscription on a votive vase dedicated to the god Enlil of Nippur, that his conquests extended "from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof," and that Enlil had "made straight his path from the Lower Sea over the Euphrates and the Tigris to the Upper Sea." The "Lower Sea" was the Persian Gulf, and the "Upper Sea" was probably at this time, as it certainly was later, the Mediterranean. After a reign of twenty-five years the Sumerian Lugalzaggisi was overthrown and taken captive by the Semite Sargon (Sharru-kin), founder of the dynasty of Akkad. The legend of Sargon, according to which he was the son of a poor woman who exposed him on the river in a basket of reeds, is probably the prototype of the stories relating the hairbreadth infantile escapes of Moses, Romulus, and other legendary heroes connected with the beginnings of nations. We shall see later that the story of Sargon's western conquests formed one of the cuneiform

copy-book exercises of a Hittite scribe in Egypt in the fourteenth century B.C. According to Sargon's own inscriptions, which came to light only recently,¹ his victorious march westward was across the countries of Mari, Yarmuti, and Ibla, and extended as far as the "Cedar Forest" and the "Silver Mountain." Mari² lay about halfway up the Euphrates from Babylonia, while the location of Yarmuti, which is undoubtedly the same as the Yarimuti of the Amarna Letters and which was, until the discovery of the new Sargon texts, thought to be a district in the Egyptian Delta, must be sought for in Northern Syria or possibly along the Cilician coast. Ibla must also have been located in this corner of Western Asia. The Cedar Forest may have been the Lebanons or Mount Amanus, while the Silver Mountain was in all probability some part of the Taurus Range where silver was mined in ancient times. These latter names undoubtedly furnish the clue to the object of this campaign of Sargon's. He was after the precious metal and the equally precious building material.

We have inscriptional evidence that two more kings of this dynasty, Naram-Sin and Shargani-sharre, reached the Westland.

Our attention is now directed to a ruler of Southern Babylonia, or Sumer, Gudea by name and patesi of Lagash (modern Telloh) by title. His date is 2600 B.C., plus or minus. Gudea was a great builder of temples and brought cedars and other building materials from "Amanus the mountains of Amurru" as well as from "Tidanu" (probably the anti-Lebanons). The inscriptions which tell of this contain no allusions to warlike operations on Gudea's part, from which it has been inferred, and probably rightly so, that the relations of this ruler with foreign countries were of a peaceful nature. It is possible, however, that the absence of such references is due to a certain delicacy of feeling, also found later in Nebuchadrezzar and some other neo-Babylonian kings, which forbade the boastful narration of military achievements in the humble record of pious deeds.

When we reach the time of the dynasty of Ur, *ca.* 2469–2353 B.C., we begin to find increasing evidence of movements in the reverse

¹ Poebel, *Historical Texts*, pp. 173 f.

² See Clay, *Miscellaneous Inscriptions in the Yale Babylonian Collection*, p. 4.

direction, namely, from the Westland toward Babylonia. That such movements did not, however, begin at this time is shown by a reference in an inscription of Eannadum, who lived probably two centuries before the time of Sargon of Akkad, which indicates that Mari (see above) was in league with the kings of Kish, the old enemies and frequently the overlords of the city-kingdoms of Sumer. Ur was of course a Sumerian city, but the Semitic names of the last kings of this Ur dynasty, Bur-Sin, Gimil-Sin, and Ibi-Sin, as well as a reference to a Dagan temple in the date formulae of the time of Dungi, the second king, show that the whole of the line was Semitic and, more than that, West-Semitic.

The earliest historical records which have been preserved for us picture the Sumerian city-kingdoms in a state of chronic warfare with each other. It evidently was an easy matter for some West-Semitic chieftain to fight his way into the land and establish himself as ruler of one or more cities. But what one could do others might try, and that they did is shown by a date formula of Gimil-Sin which reads: "Year in which Gimil-Sin, king of Ur, built the wall of the Amorites called 'warding off Tidnim'" (cf. Tidanu of the Gudea inscription). But walls (there are no natural defenses of Babylonia on the Arabian side) could not hold back the Amorites. About 2352 B.C. Ishbi-Urra came from Mari (see above) and founded a dynasty in Isin, another city of Sumer.

The Isin dynasty had a rival in the dynasty of Larsa (Ellasar of Gen. 14:1), which was established soon after the advent of Ishbi-Urra. About 2143 B.C. the Elamite Kudur-Mabuk succeeded in putting his son Warad-Sin upon the throne of Larsa. This king was followed by his brother Rim-Sin, who captured Isin in 2115 B.C. But while these rival dynasties were fighting for the control of Sumer, another band of West-Semites pushed into and subdued Akkad, the northern part of Babylonia. Their first center in the valley seems to have been Sippar, but Babylon was soon made their capital and gave the name to their line of kings—the First Dynasty of Babylon (2223–1926 B.C.). Our chief interest is in the sixth and greatest of these rulers, Hammurabi, who in his thirty-first year overthrew Rim-Sin and became master of the whole of

Sumer and Akkad. A number of references in the inscriptions from his reign and from those of his successors indicate that Amurru may have been brought fairly well under the control of these kings. But, whatever the extent and degree of the Babylonian authority in the Westland, it was of comparatively short duration, for the First Dynasty came to an end in 1926 B.C.

That the kings of the First Dynasty, who, as we have seen, hailed from the Westland, early became good Babylonians is to be taken for granted. Their problem was the same as that of the kings of Ur before them, namely, to hold back, or at least control, the ever-increasing stream of westerners which was sweeping from the desert and steppes to the westward down into the rich alluvial plain of Babylonia. How small their success was in the first regard is to be seen in the large number of West-Semitic personal names found on the documents from this epoch.

We now jump across half a millennium to the Amarna period, roughly 1400 B.C. The Babylonian records from the intervening centuries are few and for our purpose unimportant.

The documents which are to interest us now are the well-known Amarna Tablets, found in Egypt in 1886. Part of these form the correspondence between the Egyptian Pharaohs, the Amenhoteps III and IV and their "brothers," the kings of Karduniash (Babylonia), Assyria, Mitanni, Arzawa, Alashia (Cyprus), and Hatti (the Hittite land), but the majority are letters which passed between the Egyptian court and the Syrian and Palestinian vassals of the Pharaohs.

The first thing that strikes us about these letters is the script and language in which they were written. That the Assyrian and Babylonian kings should have written to the Pharaoh in the cuneiform script and the Babylonian tongue is not surprising, but that the Hittites, Mitannians, and other non-Semitic peoples should have made use of these when writing to the Egyptian king is certainly remarkable. And most astonishing of all is the fact that the correspondence carried on between the Pharaohs and their vassals in Syria-Palestine should have been in the Babylonian language and script. And the explanation of this phenomenon? Babylonian was the diplomatic and commercial language, the *lingua franca* of

the ancient world in this period.¹ The Amarna Letters are not our only witness to this fact. Cuneiform documents dating from about the same period as the Amarna Tablets and containing the correspondence which passed between Syrian chieftains were unearthed by the excavations in Palestine. In 1907 Professor Winckler published a preliminary account of the royal archives of the Hittites which he uncovered at Boghaz-Keui, a village lying east of the Halys in Central Asia Minor and occupying the site of the ancient capital of the Hittites. Here, too, the cuneiform script and the Babylonian language were employed for the writing of domestic and foreign documents. The Babylonian script was also used to write the Hittite language. The same state of affairs obtained in Mitanni and Arzawa.

Let us look at this situation for a moment longer. The ancient world was divided between two great civilizations, the one on the Nile, the other on the Euphrates. The rulers of both of these empires regarded the territory which lay between them as their legitimate prey. The Babylonian kings for the most part were content to make occasional raids to the West for such plunder as these might bring and to keep the paths open to the cedar forests and other sources of much-coveted building material. Only in the case of Hammurabi and his successors do we have evidence of what may have been an attempt to organize some of these western regions (the Aleppo district?) under Babylonian rule. But we are not even sure of this. Certainly the Kassite kings of the Amarna period recognized the Pharaohs as lords of Syria.²

Egypt, on the other hand, seems to have put forth efforts from earliest times to dominate the whole of Syria-Palestine and was actually master here for centuries. And yet it was not the Egyptian tongue with the facile reed and the almost imponderable papyrus, but the Babylonian language written in an awkward script upon cumbersome clay tablets, that won the day.

How this came about is easily understood when we study our Babylonian history. The Babylonians were pre-eminently a commercial people. Their neighbors and kinsmen the Assyrians had

¹ In a later day the Aramaic played this rôle.

² "Kinahhi (Canaan) is thy land" (Kn. No. 8, 25 f.), the words of Burra-buriash to the Pharaoh.

planted a trading colony in Cappadocia as early as the middle of the third millennium B.C. The Amarna Letters furnish ample evidence that Babylonian merchants were actively engaged in trade with Syria-Palestine and the Westland generally about the middle of the following millennium. The history we have passed in review showed that the only barriers between Babylonia and Amurru were walls built by the Babylonian kings to "ward off Tidnim." The western campaigns of these rulers prevented the rise of dangerously large states in Syria and, what is more important, kept open the paths of trade.

We may be sure, therefore, that from time immemorial the caravans of the Babylonian merchants regularly visited the Westland and brought to this region, not only Babylonian wares, but also the Babylonian language and script. This was not all. If we examine the commercial conquest of Africa now being accomplished by the Arabic-speaking Moslems, we find that the traders are carrying even more than Arabic commercial terms along with their merchandise. Mohammedan customs, law, and religion penetrate as far as the trader goes; every Moslem is a missionary. To be sure, we have no evidence that the Babylonian merchant was interested in the soul's salvation of his western customers; his interests were probably strictly commercial; nevertheless he was the bearer of other than material goods.

Now it looks as if most of the Syrian-Palestinian weights and measures had come from Babylonia. Who but the Babylonian merchant could have brought them? It is a well-known fact that many of the laws found in the Torah of the Hebrews, especially those found in the so-called Book of the Covenant, are strikingly similar to laws found in the Code of Hammurabi, a code which was in existence a thousand years before the Torah and which defined business procedure, not only for Hammurabi's day, but for all future time in Babylonia. And business in Babylonia was much more of a legal matter than it is with us. The written document, drawn up by the notary and bearing the names and seals (or equivalent) of witnesses, was absolutely essential to any business transaction.¹ Is it not highly probable that the Babylonian

¹ That it was not safe to do business otherwise may be seen from sections 9 and following of the Code of Hammurabi.

merchants brought west with them their Babylonian way of doing business—in other words, introduced into Syria-Palestine Babylonian business law? We shall come back to this matter of the connections between Hebrew and Babylonian law later. Professor Zimmern has gathered together many of the commercial and other technical terms common to the Babylonian language and one or more of the other Semitic tongues (the Hebrew of course included), and it is clear that in a large number of cases the evidence points to Babylonia as the original source of much of the culture of the other Semitic peoples.¹ We have already called attention to the fact that a Hittite scribe in Egypt used as his copy-book exercise a story concerning the western conquests of Sargon of Akkad. In this story another hero, Adamu by name, is mentioned.² This may be the source of the Old Testament name of the ancestor of the race. Other scribes practiced their cuneiform by copying the Adapa-myth, the myth of Nergal and Ereshkigal, and other bits of Babylonian literature. Is it not probable that the Babylonian account of the Deluge, which certainly was the source of the Old Testament Flood Story, reached Canaan in the same way? The similarity of the infantile adventures of Moses and Sargon has already been referred to. The legend of Sargon may well have lightened the labors of the Canaanite scribes as they plodded on toward the mastery of the cuneiform. Finally, lest we forget that the Babylonian merchant had wares for sale, let me remind you that according to the Old Testament tradition among the first spoil taken by the Israelites as they entered the Promised Land was “a goodly Babylonish mantle” (Josh. 7:21).

Our further interest in the Amarna Letters centers in the remarkable picture which these furnish us of conditions in Syria in the fourteenth century B.C. It is a picture of chaos. A century before, the Pharaoh Thutmose III had re-established Egyptian rule in Syria, which had been lost in the confusion of the Hyksos period. His immediate successors seem to have been able to maintain order in the land, but under Amenhotep III and especially under Amenhotep IV, who was more interested in theology than in political problems, there was a complete relapse. The Amarna Letters,

¹ *Die akkadische Lehnwörter*, etc.

² See Sayce in *PSBA*, 1915, pp. 227 f.

supplemented by the Boghaz-Keui documents already referred to, allow us not only to follow but also to account for this decline of Egyptian authority in Syria. A strong Hittite state was forming in Central Asia Minor, and before long it was pushing into Northern Syria. The local Syrian princes were compelled to make their choice between loyalty to the Pharaoh and submission to the Hittite king. The latter was at hand with his army, while the former seemed unable to realize the gravity of the situation in spite of the numerous and frantic letters which came to him from those who would gladly have remained loyal, and so we are not surprised to find the Pharaoh's vassals making the best possible terms with the Hittite. At the same time that the Hittites were encroaching upon the northern portions of Syria and alienating, by force or intrigue, the subjects of the Pharaoh, there were steadily advancing into the fertile regions of Syria-Palestine bands of nomadic and semi-nomadic people from the desert and steppe land to the eastward. In the Letters these invaders of Syria-Palestine are referred to as the *Sutu* or the *Habiri* (*SA-GAZ*). It is evident that they were ready to attach themselves to any local dynast who could pay them well or to any free-lance who could guarantee them booty—and more and more of these were springing up. Most scholars have assumed that the *Hebrews* of a later day were part of the *Habiri*. This brings us to the problems connected with the Exodus and Conquest.

If it were necessary to settle the problems which confront us here before going on, there would be no going on. But this is not necessary, for it is the object of this discussion to show, or try to show, that the attempt to make the exodus from Egypt and the covenant at Sinai (or Kadesh) the starting-point of Israel's national life as well as of Yahwism must be given up. We need not even pass in review the many attempts that have been made at the solution of these problems. There is one point—and it is about the only one—on which there is agreement, and that is the point of departure. That the starting-point of any discussion of the Exodus must be the so-called Israel-stela of Merneptah, found in 1896, is generally recognized. From this stela we learn that Israel was in Canaan, and probably in the hills of Ephraim, about the

year 1225 B.C. This is the earliest historical reference to Israel that has yet come to light. Most scholars hold that Israel must have left Egypt a generation or more before this date; Eerdmans, on the other hand, believes that Israel did not enter Egypt until after it. Then again we find scholars trying to overcome some of the difficulties that confront them by dividing Israel. According to their hypothesis, it was only the Rachel tribes (or Jacob) who sojourned in Egypt and came out from there in or before Merneptah's day. The Leah tribes (or Israel) were in Canaan as early as the Amarna period. There are even those who would compel us to take down our dictionary and look up the plural of exodus.

Besides the name of Israel found on the Merneptah stela, there are two other names occurring in extra-biblical documents which have been drawn into this discussion. The first of these is the name of a body of foreigners who did task work on the temples of Ramses II (1292-1225 B.C.) and were still working in Egyptian quarries a century or more later. They were called *aper* or *apri* (^c*pr* or ^c*prj*: the Egyptian script does not vocalize its words). The second name is that of the people whom we found pushing into Canaan in the Amarna period, namely, the Habiri. Both of these names have been identified with the Old Testament word "Hebrew," *'ibri*. At the present time the majority of scholars are inclined to reject the first identification, while they accept the second. It is noticeable, however, that since a reference to the "gods of the Habbiri" was discovered on one of the Boghaz-Keui documents it has been found more necessary than ever to insist that the Hebrews could have been only a *part* of the Habiri mentioned in the Amarna Letters. This became imperative when it developed that *SA-GAZ* people were mentioned as early as 2000 B.C. in a letter of Hammurabi to Sin-idinnam. The fact is that *habbiri* seems to have been one of two (the other was *habbatu*) words meaning "plunderer," or the like, which might be written ideographically in the Babylonian as *SA-GAZ*. Furthermore it seems evident that this ideogram and its phonetic equivalents were used to designate from at least 2000 B.C. the nomadic tribes living to the west of Babylonia, whose depredations no doubt warranted the application of the name "plunderer" to them. The writer is of the opinion that

the linguistic difficulties in the way of identifying *ḥabbiri* with "Hebrew" are much more serious than is usually supposed;¹ nevertheless, he is of the firm conviction that the tribes which were then, or later became, Israel entered Canaan in the Amarna times—that is, about 1400–1300 B.C. The reasons for this belief follow.

Israel was in Canaan in 1225 B.C. or thereabouts. This is the historical fact with which we must start. In the next place, the Amarna Letters furnish us the indubitable evidence of an invasion of Syria-Palestine during the reigns of Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV (1411–1358) by the Sutiu and *SA-GAZ* (*ḥabiri*) peoples—that is, by the nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes which roamed the desert and steppe lands which stretch along the Euphrates from Babylonia to Syria. As already indicated the cuneiform texts mention these "plunderers" as early as the days of Hammurabi, and no doubt they had been collecting *baksheesh* from the Babylonian merchants from time immemorial. Now they were pushing, or more likely being pushed, out of their old stamping-grounds. In other words, Arabia, the cradle of the Semites, was sending forth one of its periodic waves of hungry tribesmen into the more favored regions round about. Such a wave of migration extends over centuries of time, and we cannot, therefore, be absolutely certain that the particular hordes we read about in the Amarna Letters included the tribes which then or later made up Israel. These might have entered the land before or after the Amarna period. Gressmann, for example, speaks without qualification of a second and more gentle wave of Aramean tribesmen which the "Eastland spat out" and which spread over the south of Palestine, the Negeb and Desert of Judea, where they lived the sorry but untrammelled life of the semi-nomad until drought and famine compelled to new wanderings.² Egypt, or Goshen, was the refuge of such starving tribes. This second wave of Aramean tribesmen, the Hebrews of the Old Testament, came out of the East, according to Gressmann,

¹ The word *ḥabbiri* is probably a *kattil*-form, like *ḥabbatu* (*kattal*), not = *ʿābir* > *ʿōbēr* (participle), as Böhl thinks (*Kanaanäer und Hebräer*, p. 89). Besides, the gentilic *ʿibrī* = "Hebrew" can hardly have come from the participial form *ʿābir*. The Old Testament is right in regarding *ʿeber*, "Heber," as the name from which the gentilic is derived. No more could the gentilic be formed from a *kattil*-form like *ḥabbiri*.

² Gressmann, *Mose und seine Zeit*, chap. iii, pp. 393 f.

by 1300 B.C. at the latest. We need not inquire into the reasons for Gressmann's assumption (there is not a scrap of evidence to prove it fact) of a second wave of migration. At this point we are merely interested in the implications of such a hypothesis.

Let us return to the Amarna Letters. Is it possible to determine from these letters whether the invading tribes from the East succeeded in establishing themselves in the land? If so, in what parts? The answer of the letters to these questions has already been given by Böhl,¹ who calls our attention to the interesting fact that, while in most instances the names of the cities from which the Palestinian letters were sent are not mentioned, nevertheless, when such names are given, they are those of cities which the Israelites never conquered or which did not fall into their hands until long after the entrance into Canaan (cf. Judg., chap. 1). The coast cities like Tyre, Sidon, Akko, and Askelon, together with Megiddo, Gezer, Lachish, and, most important of all, Jerusalem, are examples. Why do we not have letters from such old centers as Bethel, Hebron, Beersheba, Shiloh, and Gibeon? Böhl admits that their absence may be accidental, but believes that another explanation is more probable, namely, that we have no letters from these cities because they were already in the hands of the Israelites. To this *argumentum e silentio* he is able to add positive evidence. Besides Jerusalem, Shechem was one of the most important centers of the Israelite territory. We have only to recall our Old Testament history to realize this. Furthermore, it is evident from the tradition as well as from the early history that this was one of the first Canaanite cities to fall into the hands of the invading Israelites (cf. Gen., chap. 34; 48:22; Josh., chap. 24; Judg., chap. 9). Now Shechem is mentioned but once in the Amarna Letters (Kn. 289, 23), and, although the passage presents linguistic difficulties, it is almost certain from this reference that the Habiri were at the time in possession of that city.

Böhl also calls attention to the biblical chronology which puts the exodus from Egypt 480 years before the beginning of the building of Solomon's Temple (I Kings 6:1). The entrance into Canaan would fall, according to this chronology, at about 1414 B.C. Judg.

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 67 f.

11:26 estimates the length of Israel's occupation of the east Jordan country up to Jephthah's day at 300 years. Now the writer is aware (as was Böhl) of the usual treatment these figures receive at the hands of critical scholars. But have we really disposed of them when they are bracketed and declared late insertions into the text? Where did the later writers get hold of them? Out of their thumbs? Before we can get rid of these figures, which were undoubtedly rough estimates, we must show cause for doubting the possibility that there was preserved for these later writers in the tradition or even in writing the number of generations which had come and gone since Israel entered Canaan. However, we do not care to insist upon using these figures as evidence of the date of Israel's entrance into the Promised Land. But we do insist that the Amarna Letters make it as clear as we could possibly expect documents of this nature to do, that the invaders of Canaan mentioned therein were gaining or had already gained a foothold in the regions later occupied by the Israelite tribes. Of course it is possible that the invasion of Canaan in the Amarna period was similar to the exploit of the king of France who marched up the hill and then marched down again. But if the invaders stayed, what then? Either they absorbed the native population or were absorbed by this. In either case the process must have been a slow one. Gressmann's second wave of migration—that is, the Hebrews—after their sojourn in the Negeb, their experiences in Egypt and Kadesh, entered the Promised Land about 1230 B.C., roughly a century after the Amarna period, and began the conquest of the land all over again. Unless the previous invaders had left the land or had become Canaanites in a remarkably short time, it is difficult to harmonize Gressmann's hypothesis with the early history of the Israelites as found in Judges. Sisera's nine hundred chariots of iron would alone be evidence that the Israelites in their conquest of Canaan did not come up against newcomers, but against an old and highly civilized population. Gressmann's hypothesis is merely an attempt to wave the magic wand of criticism over admitted legend and have history issue therefrom.

There is a further bit of evidence which points to the Amarna period as the time of Israel's invasion of Canaan. The excavators

of the site of the ancient Jericho are convinced on archaeological grounds that the destruction of the Canaanite wall and city cannot be put later than the Amarna times.¹ Now, according to the Old Testament traditions the capture of Jericho was the first exploit of the invading Israelites. How does this fit in with Gressmann's second-wave hypothesis? It would mean that the Canaanite Jericho had withstood the *SA-GAZ* and Sutiu whose activities in the Amarna period threatened every city in the land and brought to an end Egyptian rule in Canaan and then fell a victim to a hand-ful of Israelites a century later.

Just a word about the sojourn in Egypt. That there is a kernel of history in the tradition of Israel's stay in Egypt is not to be doubted. We know that Edomite clans were allowed to pasture their flocks in Goshen, but this does not compel us to accept the Old Testament legends as history. The only evidence as to the date of the sojourn in Egypt is furnished by the reference to the store-cities Pithom and Raamses (Exod. 1:11). These cities were built by Ramses II, who reigned from about 1292 to 1225 B.C. The whole or part of the stay in Egypt must have fallen between these two dates. Gressmann puts the exodus from Egypt and the conquest of Canaan between the years *ca.* 1260 and 1225 B.C. The latter date is determined by the Merneptah stela (see above). This would, of course, exclude the possibility of placing the Conquest in the Amarna period unless the sojourn in Egypt came after the Conquest (Eerdmans). Now it seems to the writer that the problem has been made unnecessarily difficult by the assumption that all or practically all of the tribes that later made up Israel had been in Egypt. Meyer, in page after page of the most cogent argument, based upon the Old Testament records themselves, has shown what should have been clear from the most casual reading of these—namely, the fact that Israel and Judah developed almost entirely independent of each other, the former in the North, the latter in the South (Negeb). For a short time only, under David and Solomon, were the southern tribes a part of Israel.² When "Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to

¹ Sellin und Watzinger, *Jericho*, p. 181.

² Ed. Meyer, *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme*, especially pp. 442 f.

make him king," and "when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents" (I Kings 12:1, 16) and stayed there. The conquest of Canaan by *Israel* in the Amarna period is, therefore, not rendered improbable by the admission of a sojourn of one (Levi?) or more of the *southern* tribes in Egypt in the days of Ramses II. Whether the same wave of migration which brought the Israelites into the hills of Ephraim and the surrounding territory also took the southern tribes into the Negeb is a question which cannot be answered. But the events which took place in the full light of history make it almost impossible to assume that there had been any such organization into one nation of the northern and southern tribes as the stories of the Exodus, the Covenant at Sinai, and the Conquest take for granted. If Israel's conquest of the North and gradual growth into a nation were independent of developments in the South, as we believe was the case, then the first part of the Old Testament and higher-critical hypothesis which makes Moses the leader of the people (organizer of the nation) and prophet (organizer of the religion) falls to the ground.

What about Moses as organizer of the religion? Here we approach our main problem. Fortunately, most of the labor toward the solution of this problem has already been done, and it is possible for us to be very brief.

The Covenant at Sinai, according to the Old Testament hypothesis, the enthronement of Yahweh at Kadesh under the leadership of Moses the prophet, according to the hypothesis of our critical scholars, marks the beginning of the worship of Yahweh in Israel. Over against the hypothesis of the Covenant at Sinai I would place the results of the brilliant work of Bernhard Luther and Eduard Meyer on the cult of Shechem (*Israeliten*, pp. 542 f.). They begin with an analysis of Deut. 11:26-30 and 27:1-26, and find that the underlying account *traced the worship at Shechem with its altar on Mount Gerizim and the ceremony of the blessings and curses back to a command of Moses*. This was evidently the story as told by an Israelite, namely E, who saw in Shechem the chief

sanctuary of the land. The account was worked over by Deuteronomic writers (11:26-28; 27:8, 9 f., 11-13) and cut in two by the insertion of the book of the law (chaps. 12-26). Later the ceremony of the blessings and curses was transferred together with the mountains Gerizim and Ebal to Gilgal near Jericho (Deut. 11:30). The passage in Josh. 8:30-35 was also "corrected." The reason is evident. Gerizim and Shechem could not be allowed such honors by those who saw in Zion and Jerusalem the center of Yahwism. Finally, the clumsy substitution of Ebal for Gerizim was made in Deut. 27:4 and Josh. 8:30.

The next step takes us to the account of the last days of Joshua (Josh., chap. 24). At the close of his career Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem (vs. 1) and "made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God; and he took a great stone and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of Jehovah. And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us; for it has heard all the words of Jehovah which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness against you, lest ye deny your God" (vss. 25 f.). This great stone is evidently the same as the one mentioned in Judg. 9:6, **אלון מצב**, "the oak of the pillar, *maṣṣebah*." Note particularly the words "and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem," **וישם לו חק ומשפט בשכם**. Almost the same words are put into the mouth of Moses at Marah, **שם שם לו חק ומשפט** (Exod. 15:25). The making of the covenant is mentioned in Exod. 34:28, at the end of the older Decalogue, and in Exod. 24:3-8, in connection with the Book of the Covenant. It is, of course, a well-known fact that we have two accounts of the acceptance of Yahweh as the only God of Israel, the putting away of strange gods, the giving of the law and making of a covenant. These epoch-making events in the history of Israel's religion are the work of Moses at Sinai (Horeb) and Kadesh. But the job is done all over again by Joshua at Shechem. That we have here but variant accounts of the same events has long been suspected, but it remained for Luther and Meyer to insist that the account which attributes this work to Joshua at Shechem is undoubtedly the

older. The law-giving and entrance into covenant relationship, accompanied with the ceremony of the blessings and curses, clearly belong to Shechem, the home of the old *Baal-berith* or *El-berith* (lord or god of the covenant). It would appear, therefore, as if the law-giving and covenant at Sinai would have to be set aside as unhistorical, and that the fathers of the Samaritan woman who "worshiped in this mountain" had been worshiping in the "place where men ought to worship" (John 4:20). In a word, *Gerizim and not Sinai was the mountain of the law.*

It has been suggested that the Book of the Covenant, Exod. 20:22—23:19, originally stood in Josh., chap. 24—that is, formed the "book of the law of God" mentioned in vs. 26. This is doubted by Luther, but, the writer believes, for insufficient reasons. Here at Shechem stood the "oak of the lawgiver" (אלון בורדו, Gen. 12:6 and elsewhere) with a *maššebah* and an altar called "El, god of Israel" (Gen. 33:20). By this same oak, called in this case the "oak of the *maššebah*," אלון מצב, the Shechemites gathered to make Abimelech king (Judg. 9:6). Another sacred tree in this neighborhood was the "oak of the soothsayers" אלון מטננים (Judg. 9:37). Such passages as these show clearly that law-giving was associated with Shechem. The Abimelech episode (Judg., chaps. 9 f.) is but one of the numerous passages in the Old Testament writings which point to Shechem as the political center of Israel in the early days, and the incidents recorded in I Kings 12:1 f. bear witness to the continued political importance of this city even after the union of the North and the South. Although Omri moved the capital to Samaria, Mount Gerizim evidently continued to be the sacred mountain of the Israelites. It has remained to this day the center of the Samaritan worship. If Joshua promulgated any code of laws at Shechem, and if any of this legislation has survived, the writer can think of no part of the Torah as more likely to contain these survivals than the Book of the Covenant. Luther believes that, since Joshua's law-giving was in connection with the covenant, the act whereby Yahweh became the God of Israel, his laws may hardly be looked for in the legal decisions (*Rechtsbestimmungen*) of the Book of the Covenant. Joshua's laws, he thinks, must have been in part, at least, cult-regulations (*kultische Bestimmungen*).

Consequently Exod., chap. 34, makes a greater appeal to him. However, he admits that the "curses" contain no cultregulations whatever. The Shechem-Torah cannot, therefore, have consisted wholly of such. But since the Book of the Covenant contains both kinds of legislation, as he admits it does, it is difficult to see any weight in his objections.

The writer believes that there can be no doubt that the legislation contained in the Book of the Covenant originated in the North. It is almost inconceivable that the South ever produced the material civilization which this code presupposes. We have already pointed out the fact that there is much evidence to show that this Book of the Covenant probably contains the Canaanite adaptation of the Babylonian laws which the merchants from the Tigris-Euphrates valley gradually carried with them to the Westland during the centuries of trade with these regions. This does not, of course, mean that all Canaanite (and Israelite) law came from Babylonia. Canaanite customs crystallized into law just as surely as did Babylonian customs. Soon after the discovery of the Code of Hammurabi the late Professor D. H. Müller, of Vienna, whose sympathies were never with the so-called "higher critics," pointed out, among other things, the fact that the arrangement of the laws in the Code of Hammurabi and in the Book of the Covenant is so nearly identical that it seemed necessary to assume some kind of connection between the two codes. We need not stop to discuss his attempt to derive both codes from an *ur-Semitisch* law and to show that Abraham was the carrier of this to Canaan.¹ The whole question was canvassed again only recently by Johns,² who concludes that borrowing from the Babylonian law seems certain. I shall give but one of several of his very ingenious arguments. According to the Book of the Covenant a Hebrew slave served six years and then went free (Exod. 21:2). Now in Deut. 15:12-18, where the same matter is taken up, a curious statement is added: "It shall not seem hard to thee, when thou lettest him go free from thee; for to the double of the hire of a hireling hath he served thee six years" (vs. 18). Now, says Johns, the last clause can only mean

¹ *Die Gesetze Hammurabis*, especially pp. 210 f.

² *The Relation between the Laws of Babylonia and the Laws of the Hebrew People.*

that six years' service is the double of something, and that something is evidently *three* years' service. But three years is exactly the length of time the Babylonian slave (for debt) served. Consequently we must assume that a three-year period of service was all the older (Canaanite) law allowed. This three-year period was probably one of the many Babylonian institutions which were taken over into the Canaanite civilization and from there into the Israelite.

The writer would like to call attention to a few more points of possible contact between the Babylonian and the Hebrew legislation. They deal with externals only.

The first point has to do with the matter of the "blessings and curses." In the Deuteronomy passages mentioned above (Deut. 11:29; 27:14 f.) we have an account of the ceremony of the blessings and curses which concluded the law-giving and covenant episode. The twelve curses to which all the people answered and said "Amen" are preserved; the blessings have not come down to us. This has always seemed strange to scholars. The writer believes that the Code of Hammurabi may throw some light upon this matter. At the end of that Code we find a few perfunctory remarks (covering sixteen lines) as to the blessings which will make glad the reign of the future prince who shall uphold the law which Hammurabi laid down. Then follow at great length and in minutest detail (over 280 lines) the curses which all the gods whose names Hammurabi could recall will bring upon the prince who shall set aside that law. A similar preponderance of curses over blessings is to be observed in the "blessings and curses" found at the end of Assyrian inscriptions. The curses were the important thing from the oriental viewpoint. So it is possible that in the ceremony of the blessings and curses, which is perhaps the Canaanite adaptation of the blessings and curses appended to the Babylonian code, and which followed the law-giving and covenant at Shechem, the blessings were passed over with a word, while the curses were recited at great length and with much emphasis. The curses rather than the blessings were depended on to impress the popular mind.

In the second place, if the law-giving and covenant at Shechem, by the hand of Joshua, are the historical facts upon which the account of the Sinai law-giving and covenant are based, then it is

probable that many of the details which stand in the latter account were also derived from the story of the events at Shechem. To one of these details I should like to direct attention.

In Exodus (31:18; 32:15, etc.) we read of Moses' descent from the mount with "the two tables of the testimony in his hand; tables that were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written." Now the word for "tables" (לוחות) is also known in the Assyrian-Babylonian (*liu*), and may there denote cuneiform tablets. Whether the tables which Moses (Joshua) brought down from the mount were tables of clay or "tables of stone"—in the Babylonian it might also denote the latter—the fact that they were written on both sides makes one think of cuneiform tablets at once. The official copy of the Code of Hammurabi was inscribed upon a stone pillar, but copies on clay tablets were made for use in the law courts of the different cities of the empire. Fragments of such have come down to us. From these one may estimate the probable number of tablets in such an edition. Six or at most seven is the writer's estimate. Now the Book of the Covenant plus the "curses" would not crowd two cuneiform tablets of similar size. We have laid great stress on the fact that in the Amarna period the Babylonian language and script were in general use in Canaan. Has the Old Testament story preserved the evidence that the *Canaanite* laws handed down from Mount Gerizim were written on clay tablets and in the cuneiform script?

The question of the origin of Yahweh-worship in Israel still remains. Luther states frankly his belief that we are altogether in the dark as to how and when Yahweh came to the Israelites. The writer believes, however, that we have one line of trustworthy evidence open to us, namely, that of the personal names found in the Old Testament. The study of the personal names found in the cuneiform has been of the greatest value for determining the movements of the different racial elements in the Nearer Orient. Gray, in his *Studies in Hebrew Proper Names* (1896), has summarized the evidence of the Old Testament names for us:

Moses, according to the Old Testament tradition, revealed to the Hebrews the name Yahweh. Whether the name was known before his time, either in

other tribes or in Moses' own family or not, has long been a matter of dispute; and it is a question which the present investigation cannot decide. . . . The next point to be considered is the infrequency of the compounds with יה in the earliest period [before David]; for in view of two facts—(1) the greater frequency in the same period of compounds with אל, (2) the rapid increase of compounds with יה in the following period—we may safely infer that the infrequency of these names in the literature of the earliest period corresponds to infrequency in actual life. . . . Further, the only name which is philologically quite certain and unambiguous, and which goes far back beyond the Davidic period, is יהונתן (Judg. 18:30), and this, significantly enough, is the name of a member of the family of Moses. The other quite early name is יהושוע [pp. 257 f.].

In short, with a very few exceptions, the personal names of the Hebrews before the Davidic period were not compounded with the name of their deity. On the other hand, beginning with this period such compounds become increasingly common. Did Moses introduce Yahweh into Israel?

But, before answering this question, we must tarry a moment over the names found in extra-biblical, cuneiform sources, which have been produced as evidence to show that Yahweh-names are known from at least 2000 B.C.

Barton, in an article "Yahweh before Moses,"¹ has gathered the names together. His attitude is generally skeptical, but he admits the possibility that a goodly number of these examples may contain the name of Yahweh. Now Daiches,² whose work Barton ignored, had already disposed of most of these supposed Yahweh-compounds. Indeed we might have been spared all sorts of wild conjectures had those who took up this matter been willing to keep before them the known facts when they set out to attempt the interpretation of uncertain ones.

First of all, we must bear in mind that there are no personal names containing the element Yahweh (יהוה), either in the Old Testament itself or in the extra-biblical sources (the Aramaic papyri found at Elephantine). The names found in the Old Testament and the papyri which contain the name of the Hebrew deity as an element give that name as Jeho (or Jahu יהו), Jo (י), or Jah (יה).

¹ *Studies in the History of Religion Presented to C. H. Toy* (1912), pp. 187 f.

² In *ZA*, XXII (1909), 125 f.

Furthermore, and this point is particularly emphasized by Daiches, both the biblical and extra-biblical *post-exilic* names invariably have Jah (יה) as second element, never Jahu (יהו), which is used interchangeably with Jah (יה) in the names of the earlier periods. Now these are known quantities. Let us turn to the known quantities in the cuneiform documents. We begin with a few Hebrew names found in the historical texts from the Assyrian period: *Ia-u-ha-zi*=Jehoahaz (יהואחז, evidently the fuller form of the name of which Ahaz, אחז, is an abbreviation), *Ha-za-ki-ia-a-u* (variant forms are found)=Hezekiah (חזקיהו), *Az-ri-ia-a-u*=Azariah (עזריהו; the name is not that of the king of Judah). These Assyrian renderings of western names agree with the Old Testament forms in giving the name of the deity as Jeho or Jahu (יהו). The *h* (ה) of the Hebrew forms would naturally fall out in the Assyrian version. The Murashû texts from Nippur give us the late Babylonian (Persian period) writing of Hebrew names, the names of exiles or their descendants. Here we find ^u*Ia-a-hu-u-na-tan-nu*=Jehonathan (יהונתן). Note that the Hebrew *h* (ה) is here rendered by *h*, the Babylonian equivalent of Hebrew *h* (ח), but more particularly that the determinative for deity (*ilu*) stands before the name. Here יהו is the first element of the name. What about the forms with the name of the deity as second element? Professor Clay¹ has gathered together "no less than twenty-five names which have as a first element a word that has its exact equivalent or parallel in the Bible, which is followed by Jâma or Jâwa." This Jâma (*always* written *ia-a-ma*) should and undoubtedly does correspond to the element Jah (יה) of the post-exilic names mentioned above. The theory of Professor Clay is "that the Babylonian scribe, recognizing the element as being the Hebrew god Yahweh, arbitrarily decided to write it, when it was final in these West-Semitic names, always in accordance with the way they heard the full name pronounced." In other words, Jâma or Jâwa gives the pronunciation of the tetragrammaton יהוה. But, if the Babylonian scribe knew that this was the name of the Hebrew deity, why did he in every case fail to add the determinative *ilu*? Its absence is rendered more noticeable by its

¹ *Light on the Old Testament from Babyl*, pp. 244 f.

presence in the form ^{iu}*Iahûnatannu*. And why did he invariably write it *ia-a-ma*? Why not occasionally *ia-ma* or *ia-mi*? There is no reason for thinking that this *ia-a-ma* is anything else than the Babylonian rendering of the Hebrew Jah (יָה). The *ma* is in all probability the emphatic particle appended hundreds of times to verbal and other forms to draw the accent to the final syllable. The *a* of יָה was long and *stressed*.¹ Thus we see that the known quantities of the cuneiform agree with the known quantities of the biblical and non-cuneiform extra-biblical sources in rendering the name of the Hebrew deity as יָהֹוָה (contracted to יָה) or יָה when it appears as an element in personal names. If the form יָהֹוָה (an *x* so far as our knowledge of its pronunciation goes) never occurs as an element in the personal names found in biblical and extra-biblical documents, why should we insist on finding it in the cuneiform? The whole vicious circle of reasoning which gathers together names containing elements like *ia-pa*, *ia-ba*, *ia-mi*, and heaven only knows what else, derives from these the pronunciation of the tetragrammaton יָהֹוָה, ignores the fact that in no case are these supposed renderings of יָהֹוָה preceded by the determinative for deity (which would be the only final test in case the names were not on other grounds clearly recognizable as Hebrew), and then, on the basis of this *x* derived from *y*, concludes that Yahweh was known practically over the whole Semitic world 2000 B.C. and earlier—certainly such reasoning needs no refutation. The elements *ia-pa*, *ia-mi*, and the like are beyond the shadow of a doubt West-Semitic imperfect forms similar to the first elements of names like *iadaḥ-ilu*, *iāḥbarilu*,

¹ I wonder whether we shall not be compelled to reconsider the significance of the element יָה. Is it an abbreviated form of יָהֹוָה? Or is it the hypocoristic ending *ia*, found in the cuneiform rendering of Semitic (including West-Semitic) names from the earliest to the latest periods? (For the literature on hypocoristic endings see Clay, *Personal Names from the Cassite Period*, p. 23.) That Jah is a form of the name of the Hebrew deity follows from יָהֹוָה. But Jah is always written יָה in this formula (the one exception is Ps. 104:35) which is not the case in personal names. The form Abijam (אֲבִיָּאִם), variant of Abijah (אֲבִיָּיָה), in which the *jam* is the exact equivalent of the *ia-a-ma* of the names mentioned above, certainly looks more like a hypocoristic than like a name containing a shortened form of Jahu. That the Hebrews of the later period may have looked upon this hypocoristic ending *ia* as a shortened form of the name of their deity is possible. But it is significant that the determinative *ilu* is never found before *ia-a-ma*, which is, as we saw above, undoubtedly the cuneiform equivalent of יָה.

iakub-ilu, and dozens of others. Such a name as *ia-u-ba-ni* of the Cassite period looks at first sight as if it might contain the cuneiform equivalent of Jahu or Jeho. But so long as there are no other reasons for supposing that the name of the Hebrew deity would occur in a Babylonian (*not a Hebrew*) name five hundred years before the time of David, and there certainly are no such reasons, and until the determinative for deity is found prefixed to such a name, we must look elsewhere for an explanation of the form. To the writer it seems quite probable that the element *ia-u* is but a variant form of the interrogative pronoun *a-a-u* (*aiiu*). It is true that no example of a writing *ia-u* for this pronoun has been found. But when we turn to the indefinite pronoun *aiiiumma* (where *ma* is added to *a-a-u*, *aiiu*) we find the variant writing *ia-um-ma* (cf. Delitzsch, *AGr.*, pp. 153 f.). Furthermore, the hypocoristic forms of *ia-u-ba-ni* (or similar names), namely, *ia-u* and *ia-(a-)u-tum*, found in the same period, certainly argue against taking *ia-u* as the name of a deity.

The cuneiform versions of names containing the name of the Hebrew deity as first or second element all *date from the Assyrian (after 750 B.C.) and later periods and agree with the Old Testament and Aramaic forms of such names in giving the name of that deity as ירה or ירה*.

How and when did Yahwism come to Israel? Perhaps all of the tribes which later made up Israel and Judah knew and worshiped Yahweh before they entered their later homes. If so, it would appear as if we had to assume that all of the stories connected with the patriarchs, the judges, and early heroes were Canaanite stories taken over bodily into the Hebrew tradition. Or, on the other hand, Yahweh was introduced by Moses at a date not long before the time of David—the time when names compounded with ירה and ירה become common, largely superseding the older *El*-compounds.¹ The writer believes that *unless Yahweh was one of the negligible gods of the pantheon of the early Israelites, he was unknown to them until the missionary Levites brought him to them not many generations before the time of David.* An account of one of these missionary activities

¹ The cuneiform documents from the time of the First Dynasty of Babylon show that *El*-compounds were common in the West in 2000 B.C. and earlier.

(naturally worked over by later editors) may be seen in *Judg.*, chaps. 17 f.

Summing up: In the Amarna period, roughly 1400 B.C., a wave of Aramean tribesmen flowed into Canaan from the desert and steppes to the east. Among these were the people who later made up the tribes of Israel. That the names of these tribes as well as their number were changing all the time is to be taken for granted. About 1225 B.C. we hear for the first time of Israel, probably at this time the name of a tribe. Later the name came to be applied to a loose confederacy of the "sons of Jacob." Gradually these newcomers, who at first had simply sat down in the territory of those who could not oust them, absorbed the more advanced civilization of the old Canaanites, intermarried with them, took over the cults connected with the sacred places of the land, and told their children the same stories about these places which had been told by the older population from time immemorial. Thus the heroes (patriarchs) of Israel, as well as the Israelites themselves, came to have names such as are known to have been common in Amurru (the Westland) from before 2000 B.C., names like Jacob-el, Jephthah-el (cf. *Josh.* 19:14, 27), Joseph-el, etc. That these people, however, retained customs and cults which had been theirs before they entered the land is certain. But just which of the customs and cults mentioned in the Old Testament were pre-Canaanite it is hardly possible to determine. At Shechem, Joshua (the name need not have been the same in the oldest versions of the story¹) handed down a code of laws to the Israelites—laws which may for the most part have been codified long before by the Canaanites, perhaps on the basis of the Babylonian legal system (the Code of Hammurabi). Here also the people entered into covenant relationship with Yahweh, who now became the God of Israel. That this God had been known to the Israelites before they entered the land is possible, but not probable. It is more likely that his worship was the result of the missionary propaganda of the Levites from the south (cf. *Judg.*, chaps. 17 f.). These Levites

¹ Note that Joshua is called Hoshea in *Deut.* 32:44, *Num.* 13:8, and in *Num.* 13:16 this is given as the original name. Was Hoshea the Canaanite predecessor of the Israelite Joshua?

may once have been a tribe in the country to the south of the Israelites (among the Israelites themselves, Benjamin, "the son of the right-hand, the south," was evidently the southernmost), but they seem to have been without a country when our history begins. Moses, whose name is Egyptian, was their eponymous hero (Deut. 33:8 f.). The work of the Levite missionaries was taken up and continued by the prophets. But their activities belong to the historical period and need not detain us here. The one thing that seems certain about the ultimate source of Yahwism is that it belongs to "Sinai." "Yahweh came from Sinai, And rose from Seir unto them; He shined forth from mount Paran, And came from Meribah-Kadesh"¹ (Deut. 33:2).

We return to those writers who took their pens in hand to write the history of the Hebrews. They were Yahweh-worshippers. They insisted that the Baal-worship of the Canaanites must go. But the common people loved to gather at the sacred places to listen to the stories of the appearances of the *el*'s to men. J and E told the people that these *el*'s were but manifestations of the true God, Yahweh. Finally, Moses, in whose hands were the Urim and Thummim and who may have introduced Yahweh to Levi (Deut. 33:8 f.), became the great lawgiver of Israel, and Joshua, the earlier lawgiver, became Moses' "minister" who looked on at Sinai. All law-giving was traced back to Moses, just as Solomon received credit for all the proverbs and David for all the psalms which the Hebrews produced. It was the religious experience of the prophets of Israel that made Yahwism the religion which it became, not their adherence to and partial realization of an ideal set up centuries before by Moses.

This paper is nothing more than a modest attempt to show the necessity of keeping constantly before us the history of the whole Nearer Orient when we try to visualize the earliest steps in the political and religious evolution of the Israelites. Wellhausen's great work appeared in 1878, and since that date more than a dozen histories of Israel have been written from the Wellhausenian point of view. That steady progress has been made goes without saying, but the writer feels that, like Darwinism, the evolutionary theory

¹ Following Wellhausen's emendation of the text.

of the Wellhausen school has shown a tendency to become rigid or "orthodox." Meanwhile the rapid advances made in the decipherment of the cuneiform and hieroglyphic inscriptions have made it necessary to rewrite, perhaps one had better say have made it possible to write for the first time, the ancient history of the Nearer East. The Amarna Letters have thrown a flood of light upon the condition of Syria-Palestine in the middle of the second millennium B.C.—roughly speaking, the "patriarchial period." The discovery of the Code of Hammurabi, which dates from a period more than half a millennium before the traditional date of Moses, has been regarded by many as sufficient reason for reopening the whole question of the development of Israelite legislation. The excavation of mound after mound in Palestine has brought to light an enormous mass of archaeological material which must be taken into consideration in any discussion of the early history of the Hebrews. I believe that most Old Testament scholars feel that the results of all of these new discoveries may be fitted into the Wellhausen theory of Israel's evolution. This is probably true. But that the theory, as far as it applies to the beginnings of Israel, needs radical revision is the view of the historian Eduard Meyer. That some Old Testament scholars have the same feeling is shown by the incisive article on "Some Problems in the Early History of Hebrew Religion" by my colleague Professor J. M. Powis Smith (*AJSL*, XXXII [1916], 81 f.). Indeed, I know of no article in which the problems raised by our larger vision of the early history of the Nearer Orient have been more clearly seen or more forcibly stated. I have approached these problems from the viewpoint of the Assyriologist and have no doubt unduly stressed the Babylonian influences upon the civilization of Canaan. If I have ventured in some cases to suggest answers where my colleague in the Old Testament field was content to state the problems, it may be only another demonstration of the truth of the proverb concerning the rash fools and the reluctant angels, but if I have succeeded in bringing these problems once more before students of the Old Testament then the good old Assyrian phrase, *ulluṣ libbi*, "rejoicing of the heart," will best describe my feelings.